593* possible to speak of love toward several individuals in spite of differ-
562 ences in its intensity, depending on the various persons who [43] are
595* its objects, although we may consider such a divided love as very
152 imperfect. But whatever name one calls it and however weak in intensity one finds it, it is impossible to deny its existence.

595* Among women, it is necessary to distinguish between wives
152 of monogamous men and those of polygamists, especially in the case of "supplementary" wives. It is not hard to understand that among the latter, love is more likely to cool. Since the husband must divide his attentions and signs of affection, if only to preserve harmony, the situation could hardly be otherwise, even without the fact of very early marriages. In addition to the above-mentioned case of the cooling of affection among wives in polygamous marriages, there is no question that in these marriages, a community of souls, feelings, and interests is not established between wives and husbands to the same extent as in monogamous marriages. However, one could not state as a general rule that the wife of a polygamist does not love him, at least to some extent, depending on the individual. To maintain a priori that a man cannot be loved simultaneously by several women is logically inadmissible and contrary to the facts. Here it happens quite often that a wife leaves her polygamous husband for another because she has transferred her love to the latter. It is for the exceptions that proof should be required. Even if there are many of them, they do not invalidate the cases of real affection.

When a polygamist returns home after a long absence, he is often the object of affectionate demonstrations by his wives which are surprising to Europeans. The women fall at his feet, embrace his legs, roll on the ground, and perform contortions out of joy and emotion. It is true that the freedom resulting from colonization has done much to cool these fine sentiments.

[539] Is it beside the point to quote the saying of [44] polygamists' wives: bokungú ákafola bitáfé, lolango ákafola botéma, "the bokungú tree divides its branches, love divides the heart"? And then there is the following fable which teaches true love: a polygamist who has three wives, is accidentally wounded and lies dying on the opposite side of the river. His wives run to the shore but find no canoe. The river is infested with crocodiles. The chief wives refuse to risk their

595 152 lives by swimming across; it is the least important one who throws herself in the midst of the dangers to go and help her husband.

In most cases a woman no longer feels affection for her husband when she has given her heart to a lover. She stays with him because it would be hard to do otherwise. Her husband continues to have the use of her body and her arms, but she no longer gives him a place in her heart. As this proverb so subtly expresses it:

●[539] bɔ̌m'akwěta, mbw'á nkánge; bonsámb'ákwěta, omeka é ntegume, "the husband calls you, 'I am sick and may die'; the lover calls you, 'I will try to come.'"

595 586 The objection concerning the frequency of divorce is difficult to handle because the question is very complicated. First of all, the fact that a couple remains together, that they remain faithful to one another, is no proof of love in a society where the idea of duty is very strong. A Christian woman may come to feel a real aversion for an unfaithful husband, yet she may remain with him out of a sense of duty, out of love for the children, etc. Conversely, in a society where the idea of duty is relaxed or does not exist spouses may readily be unfaithful to one another, although basically they love each other; if it is easy to divorce they will do so rashly, for trivial reasons, without realizing that there is still love between them. (1)

1. The Honorary Attorney General A. Sohier has informed me that the experiences of his long judiciary carreer entirely confirms my statements. Their truth is reflected in the fact that for some years now in European countries, it has been necessary to permit divorced couples to remarry each other. Thus we see that they find each other again after several years of separation.

The first of my two assertions is not to be found among the Nkundɔ́, [45] since they have no moral concept of duty in our sense. But it sometimes happens that a couple who no longer love each other remain together because it is not possible for them to separate.

595 837 548 Finally, let us not forget the spirit of gain and greed. Except in a few instances, a woman expects remuneration from a man to whom she has surrendered her body. Many infidelities may be explained by this practice, at least at the present time. But on the other hand, it should be noted that the woman's demand for a "wage" from her lover may be explained by an amorous concern; by giving the woman a gift or an amount of money the man shows [49] his regard for her; it is a demonstration of his affection for her, and the woman wants to be paid in order to be sure of her lover's love. That is not to say that such instances are common or frequent, but such a feeling is natural and actually exists in more than one case. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 2.

It is not surprising that the woman who lives in circumstances which are always unfavorable to chastity and marital fidelity is easily led to adultery and often falls. That is the basis of the proverb: [589] bǒmoto ndɛ́ lofolɔ́kɔ́, nkɔ́ ngonda ɛ̌fa'nd'ɔ̌sengámɛ́, "the woman is a chrysalis; there is no forest where she does not hang" -- a clear condemnation of the frivolity of the daughters of Eve in the land of the Nkundɔ́. Nevertheless, these moral criticisms in the form of proverbs can be accepted only in a general way and must be understood cum grano salis; they leave the door wide open for exceptions.

595 152 In his Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], (p. 38), Jadot has written: "The Bantu is capable of love . . . and that is all, and his wife -- no matter what has been said -- of a certain amount of marital fidelity. In general, neither the one nor the other go too far. Platonism, Petrarchism, and Romanticism are foreign to the love of the natives . . . I know . . . of cases of fierce jealousy and of beautiful faithfulness." (2)

2. See also ibid., p. 208 ff.

152 We conclude that love exists among the Nkundɔ́. This feeling is subjected to harsh attacks and is affected by many unfavorable circumstances, which may account for its imperfection and for certain

593 834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only [539] with the lament: njôy'ɔɔna ɛ̌kɪ̌'m wímâkâ, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la botaká wǎ fafá bɔ̌kɪ̌ 'm wɛ̌nâkâ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834 291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundɔ́ are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521 831 195 In general the Nkundɔ́ see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent. If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundɔ́ possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa. We [184] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

562 exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: Mbĭmbo ĭle nd'ânsᵒimbo
836 ffa la nkŏlŏ, "boimbo fruit found under the tree have no owner; they
[539] belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

836 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no
864 shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (2), the boys because they [83] run the risk

[585]

2. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

626 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This
836 attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ebâbŏâ, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ebŏngâ, a stronger term with the same meaning.

836 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

583 received as bride price for a sister, aunt, niece, cousin, etc.

If he has no female relatives (efinanyi, bomena), or if no bride price to which he is entitled remains, he may receive a part or all of the needed capital from his father. The various members of his family each obtain either 2, 5, or from 10 to 20 rings for him [454] that they have been able to save from bride prices they have received or which they have acquired as belonga (see Chapter VI, Article V, 1), as any kind of remuneration (for work, for judging in a palaver, for mediation as ndonga, etc.), the sale price for animals, streams, or ponds, or as damages or settlement of some debt.

583 602 Indeed the worst mischance that may befall a man in love is not to have a bride price readily available and to have to set out in search of the necessary valuables anywhere he can find them. These trips take a good deal of time. For these things are not done with the great speed of nervous Europeans. He cannot simply send a message [133] to uncle X or to the husband of aunt Y, or even go to them and explain the purpose of the visit, and expect to be able to leave at once with a present. His hosts keep him for days and weeks. "Wait a bit, I will find some for you; stay a while longer, then we'll see; it's been so long since we've seen you, you can't leave so fast," etc. Quite often in fact it is entirely in the young man's interest not to leave in a hurry; he must sometimes perform a great many small services for them to win their good will, and it is even expected that he will perform larger tasks such as helping with clearing, building a hut, hunting, etc. A European would need the patience of an angel. But even the young natives, who are sometimes relatively nervous and excited, especially because they want to conclude the matter of the bride price, and who in any case do not as yet possess the calm of the older people to whom they go, must be capable of resignation and perseverance. Hence the proverbs: lokámo ntákundólaká bakonga ndá [539] lifaya, "haste will not dig up rings in foreign territory" (bakonga are often buried in the ground for better safekeeping -- a useful precaution particularly in the past, when there were brawls between villages, and raids), and bomwa w'inkúné ntásingólaká bakonga ndá lokendo, "a child's mouth does not unroll rings in the course of travels" ("unroll" -- that is, from the feet of the wife of the relative being visited).

distant village, the situation was different. Not only did she run many grave risks on the way, but it was not easy for her clan to intervene on her behalf and to obtain respect for her rights by means of force. It can be readily understood that if a wife found herself alone and isolated, without effective support from her family, her husband and parents-in-law could feel free to do her many injustices if they were unkindly disposed toward her, unless the ndonga was sufficiently influential to keep them within limits. Hence the proverb bol'ôsíkɛ, mbila ngɛ́ likwála, "if the native village is far away, peace (in the household) is like slavery." [272]

In the course of domestic quarrels an exasperated husband may shout at his wife: "Go away, go home." Usually she simply goes to the home of some female relative to wait till calm returns. But sometimes she may take his words literally and go home. When her parents are informed of what has happened, they tell their daughter that she is in the wrong. Such a thing cannot be taken tragically. The husband has acted in a moment of bad humor and extreme indignation. He did not really send her away or repudiate her. There is no question of hate or indifference. Thus the matter is not taken seriously, and when the wife calms down, her parents persuade her to go back to her husband. If he likes her enough the matter ends there; it is forgiven and forgotten. Even if, having gone to her family under these circumstances, the woman becomes ill or dies there, she herself is responsible. Thus sending her away in that manner is not in any way taken seriously; it has nothing in common with a repudiation and cannot even be compared with a wife's flight because of bad treatment.

To summarize, if a wife leaves the house in which she lives with her husband, he is obliged to go and fetch her whether she is in the right or in the wrong. On the other hand, parents will send a daughter back to her husband if she is too easily angered and runs away over trifles. The following are generally acknowledged as serious and justifiable reasons for flight: serious failures in fulfilling marital duties, punishments or repressions without just cause, excesses in just punishments.

dare to maintain that a woman's speaking out about her husband is a sign of affection. On the other hand, a woman who instead bewails her lot softly and quietly saying, ngɔ́ya ɛ́keke lɔ́ɔ́ l'ɔ́m'ɔnɛ́ na?, ("mother, what shall I do with this husband?"), will not be with him long. Her complaint is chiefly egoistic, while the other seeks the good of her spouse and her household.

As we have already mentioned, the perfect punishment, and one frequently employed in ordinary cases, is a husband's refusal to eat food prepared by his wife or to wash with water she has drawn or boiled. It is a type of reprimand to which she is sensitive. The husband's aversion must not last too long, however, for it could lead to a breaking up of the marriage, more especially since in the end the [851] woman would begin to suspect infidelities -- which do occur.

The fact that Nkundɔ́ law does not allow the husband complete freedom and clearly limits his rights does not in any way exclude the occurrence of infractions. The mass of human beings is always inferior to the moral ideal imposed by legislation. But these provisions of Nkundɔ́ law do protect a woman against her husband's excesses. We have already cited the expedients available to her: abandonment of the home shared with her husband; legal apologies (bɔɔ́ndɔ), indemnity for injuries (lɔ́ɔmbɔ). In addition, a wife who has been wronged will abstain from foods (such as meat or palm nuts) given her by her husband and, even more important, will refuse to have sexual relations with him. And for our people this is a great affront. In order to re-establish a normal and peaceful situation, a husband often has to pacify [281] his spouse by means of a bɔɔ́ndɔ. In addition to the measures mentioned, a wife may of course use insults, of which every native has a rich and varied collection.

No one can condemn or reprimand a woman for abusing a lazy husband. If he does not go to the hunt and bring back game, if he neglects the building or repair of the house, if he is too much of a laggard, if he does not fell the forest to set up food crops, it is clearly he who is in the wrong, and he will find no one who will approve of his conduct and condemn his wife. If he turns out to be incorrigible, it will not be long before the marriage is broken, according to the axiom elɔ́ng'ey'ɔ́moto ɛk'okɔ́fo, "the woman's victory is [339] divorce."

570 595 577 If a woman injures her husband during a quarrel he may not retaliate, for she is recognized as inferior and weaker than he. The husband's weapon is abstention from any food, drink, baths, etc., that she offers him. To re-establish peace she must pay a boɔndo. Nevertheless, nowadays some impetuous men no longer like to observe these rules; they want to act with violence come what may. But they are strongly reprimanded by the old men, who maintain that it is unworthy of a man to retaliate against a weaker being. This traditional attitude of the Nkundɔ seems to me to indicate a sort of chivalrous nobility based on two feelings, justice and pride. It becomes more understandable when we know that similar conduct is [563] expected with regard to Batswa, inferiors, and subjugated clans (baulɛ, sing. julɛ) in their respective spheres. (1) Thus a Booto may

1. See below, Articles V, VI, and VII, 4, B.

not apply the law of retaliation to a Botswa. Under certain circumstances, a julɛ clan may, with impunity, take what they please from the banana groves of the master's clan, etc.

Note also that it is very much out of place for a man [282] to strike his wife or punish her in any way in the presence of her parents, [607] brothers, etc. In fact, this is a very grave offense. And, according to the code of honor, the brother (cousin, etc.) must pick up the glove and fight his brother-in-law to avenge the insult. In many cases the matter ends in a divorce. For such conduct takes away the combined feeling of modesty and embarrassment (nsɔnyi) that the two parties normally feel toward one another.

Finally, we must note that the various payments made as boɔndo are included in the total amount of jɛngí or nkomí, respectively.

593x 539 In order to more clearly illustrate the Nkundɔ attitude concerning the relationship of husband and wife, it might be of interest to cite a few proverbs pertaining to the subjects discussed above:

1) Baníngá bakɔ́ndaka wǎj'á ntaka; Lombɔ́mbɛ́ aɔ́kɔ́nda Ntelá la nganja, "All the others slap their wives (but) Lombɔmbɛ beats Ntelá with a stick." (This is a reference to a historical fact.)

593x 539 2) Oótón'ifólɔ́, wɛ́ fik'onjemba, "If you do not put up with excesses of speech (on the part of your wife) you (will remain) a bachelor." (Because this is an innate fault of all women, and it is not a major one.)

3) Ófâmb'ɛ̂mwa al'ɛ́ mbóka, "Do not answer the mouth, it is a road" (it has no end).

4) Bobé 'á wǎlí, ófótón'ompólo, "A mean woman, you (nevertheless) do not refuse the warm bath (she has prepared for you)." (Do not attach much importance to her unpleasant statements. What are they in comparison to the services she performs for you?)

5) Ɛ̌kí'm'ólámbákà la wɛ̌li w'ótánsǔyá, joso ô wílima ófɛ̂n'anto ólangá fidambe bióko botóá?, "When I prepared (the food) by moonlight, you were not satisfied; nevertheless (now that it is) dark and [283] you don't see anyone, you would like me to prepare six baskets?" (It is implied that the wife addresses her husband, who is dissatisfied with the food but nevertheless wants her to prepare more of it.)

6) Lóóko lokúmo fik'ɔ̌m'aokolanga, "A little (food) basket is highly praised if your husband but love you." (Love appreciates even the slightest thing. Discontent springs from a lack of affection.)

7) Etuka lofoso, wǎj'óky'ówɛ́i, "A flashy widow, (but she is that way because she is) the wife of (another, who is) dead." (You criticize her; but don't you treat her like someone else's wife? Then what are you complaining about?)

8) Ɛ̌kokumbólá wɛ́ jwende, baíso ng'ɔ̂nkóngo; ókite nd'îlombe, baíso ng'inkótsi, "When a man takes you in marriage, (his) eyes (are) like (those of a) bonkóngo (a wild cat); you arrive in his house, (his) eyes (are) like (those of a) inkótsi (a kind of frog with protruding eyes). (At the beginning of a marriage a husband is extremely obliging and kind; but after a while he puts on a sullen face and gets angry at the least provocation.)

9) Emangá lísla, mpoké ékángola, "The beginnings of marriage are honeymoons." (But afterwards . . . .)

10) Wǎlí nd'ɛtóo, wokínda wokíka, "A wife is a kind of material; strike her, cover her." (She is a delicate object; strike her when she deserves it, but do so with calm and a sense of proportion; hold the stick with one hand and cover her body with the other.)

606 685 If one of the wife's relatives were found guilty of stealing from his (or her) relative by marriage, or even from one of the latter's relatives, the family tribunal was assembled. Out of consideration for the ties of kinship between the thief and the wife and in order not to sadden her and her family, the guilty person was not sold as a slave. He was simply turned over to the woman [293] and her family, and they were told: "Here he is; he has been found guilty of theft and should have been reduced to slavery. Out of respect for you, however, we are not selling him; we are rolling (-kilimola) him toward you. Take him as bride price and add him to the sum of the bondingo." Thus the matter was settled in a friendly fashion. If subsequently there was a divorce, the wife's family had to restore not only the bride price that had been paid but also an additional slave for the member of their group that the husband had yielded in this fashion. Thus, the transaction was not at all a fictional one.

Conversely, the same procedure was adopted in relation to a relative of the husband who had violated the rules of justice to the detriment of a member of the family related by marriage. But in that case the extradition of the guilty party was considered as the addition of a slave to the amount of the nkomf.

[539] Hence the saying: bokilô ntswâkâ ndâ ngondey'okanga, "a parent-in-law cannot die in the forest of his relatives by marriage."

The situation is no different nowadays. The only change is that, instead of giving back a slave if a dissolution of the marriage occurs, the equivalent value is paid in copper rings, etc.

727 606 The same customs governed conduct toward prisoners of war. For instance, in the course of a war Eale became the master of Bombolo, whose cousin is married to Iloko, a close relative of Eale. Iloko interceded with Eale in order to obtain Bombolo's freedom, and Bombolo was sent home but was to be considered as bondingo. The liberated prisoner thus was classed as a slave given as part of the bride price, as in the preceding case, and all the appropriate rules were followed.

Some time thereafter, a man named Bengôngô from the Ndongô village of the Bongili went to Bofili to visit his sister Bonika, who was married to Eale of Bofekô. The latter told him that the village was enraged because of the assassination of one of their people by the Batswa of the Bongili. He advised him to go [295] and hide in the fallow ground lest excited men come upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself. Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. They encircled the fallow ground and easily found poor Bengôngô, who was pitilessly massacred and eaten. His sister Bonika never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1)

1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ambôi and Baisânkoi, of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As those feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokilô ekwâsâkô, wêngoyak'eyalo, "if your bokilô has hidden you, change

607 shelters." There is another, which is cruder: bokilɔ́ tɔ̂tswe nkélé;
539 bafumba bálɛ́kɛ mbé, ení fikɔlɛ́kɛ wɛ̌, "relative by marriage, let us go to the palm grove; the bafumba ants (Dorylus wilverthi) eat palm nuts; I will eat you." The following saying, applied to someone who is always trying to clear himself, is a more or less involuntary accusation: mpɔ̂l ɔ̂kilɔ́, ámɔ́fa é mɔ̂ngo; mpɔ̂ngo y'ɔ̂kilɔ́ nsako ngá mbwá, "I do not eat my relative by marriage; on the contrary, I dip (food) in his fat; an in-law's fat is as tasty as a dog's." [296]

Nevertheless, a man never goes so far as to cause the death
602 of his sister's daughter's or other relative's husband. Or, as the
628 Nkundɔ́ say, one does not kill a person by whom one has been enriched. What is the reason for this distinction? According to our people it is the affection they feel toward their sister, daughter, etc.; they love them too much to pain them by taking away their husbands.

This treacherous and barbarous conduct is therefore directed by the bokilɔ́ toward the bokanga, that is, by those who have paid the bride price to those who have received it, but never the reverse.

Appendix

000 This appendix pertains to each of the three preceding articles. Therefore it may reasonably be placed here. It does not deal with any special law nor with a custom that is legal, universal, or common. It is concerned with isolated cases. But it seems to me that the few lines to follow are not without interest, since they give a good indication of the mentality that may be found among these people.

602 It may happen that a woman has a complaint or feels she has
578 cause to be dissatisfied with one of her relatives, for example her brother. In her opinion he may not be sufficiently kind and generous toward her, or he may treat her in a manner she considers unfair. In a moment of anger she reveals her feelings to her husband and incites him to avenge her by injuring or even killing the one who has offended her.

That is what happened several decades ago to Bosela w'ɛ̂mpwangá of Bolénge (Bongili) (who died in 1932, a very old man). His wife Ilumbá was very dissatisfied in that her brother did not give

586x 584 [567] on his own authority, for the offense was considered very serious. We can assume that the reason for this rule was to allow time for the woman's family to intervene and keep their daughter from becoming a slave by refunding the bride price paid for her.

c) In exceptional instances an exasperated husband resorted to the immolation of his wife when someone died. People cite the case of Bengóngó of Bongilá (Besombó, Bombwanja), who had his wife, Litúli of Bontole, decapitated at the ikwef at the death of his father, Bengóngó bya Yese.

If the woman had children old enough to intervene on her behalf, her husband could be prevented from carrying out his violent intentions. The proverb says, Mbótsi ntáwáká, "a mother [539] does not perish." The husband also abstained if the woman had [595] a co-wife (ebísa) who was her sister or other close relative -- either out of a feeling of shame, [385] or out of fear of undesirable repercussions. Sometimes, when a husband was caught between his wish to use the etáka and his shame or his fear of the ebísa, he hid the wife who was confined by this fork. Preferably, he asked a brother- [601] in-law to give her hospitality. In that way he got around the difficulty to a great extent, because through the law of exogamy such an arrangement placed the wife in another village, sometimes a considerable distance away. This practice was called isángyá; tómba walí isángyá.

586x 584 Instead of resorting to the procedures listed, a husband could also place his wife in the hands of the ndonga. However, it was a very unusual thing to do. The natives maintain that such action was due to a lack of affection for the wife, together with the husband's certainty that he could recover his valuables -- either because he was assured that his father-in-law was well disposed toward him (and would reimburse him or provide a replacement), or because he knew he could use the ikákelo.

As we have said, direct repudiation was extremely rare. Here we are not speaking of repudiation caused by a wife's incorrigible misconduct -- which we have just discussed -- but of repudiation against the wife's wishes. If it did occur the husband was expected to hand her over to the ndonga, and the latter, seeing

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokuku*, and a *nsngu*.[1] The four drums are called by the names, *Epunda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep bass note, *Mongye*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Monkoto*, having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Monkoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Epunda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epunda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

Mongonda. Botisnganu w'Amba lokolo,
Mongye. Ntsala ikits, otongonoko,
Epunda. Tokund' ibenge molom' o nyama,
Ombolekeke mmenge,
Lobanga lolenda ntondo,
Bikeku bilenda lobola.
Nsngu. Tobilake nkoi nkonge,
Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epunda. We are burying the *ibenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *mmenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky. (The *ibenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts. Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ibenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lobenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokundo* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsngu. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

[1] A *lokuku* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nsngu* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a vellum hide.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ekunge*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molombo* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molombo* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molombo*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

Nkombo w'ompiita olombo
W'o olak wo oto?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molombo* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing:

Bolo lowo-o, lwola okulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipasa* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopika* and *ibato*. A third class, *bowolo*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *ibato* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying